

VIRTUAL Military Family Caucus SUMMIT

Military Families in the Time of COVID

October 9, 2020

Hosted By:

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers
and
Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

CONGRESSIONAL
MFC

SCHEDULE

9:30 - 10:00am PDT

Opening Remarks:
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Rep. Sanford Bishop
Col. Cassius Bentley

10:00 - 10:10am

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper

10:10 - 10:30am

Under Secretary Matthew Donovan

10:30 - 11:00am

Education

11:00 - 11:30am

Special Education

11:30 - 12:00pm

Exceptional Family Member Program

12:00 - 12:30pm

Permanent Change of Station

12:30 - 1:00pm

Childcare

1:00 - 1:30pm

Healthcare

1:30 - 2:00pm

Housing

2:00 - 2:30pm

Spouse Employment/Licensing

2:30 - 3:00pm

Military Retirement/Transitioning/Separation

3:00pm

Closing remarks

OPENING REMARKS



Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers is Eastern Washington's chief advocate in Congress. As co-chair of the Military Family Caucus, Cathy has led to raise troop pay, boost military funding, and help Fairchild Air Force Base become the largest tanker base in America. She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2004. For nine terms, she has earned the trust of her constituents and praise on Capitol Hill for her hard work, conservative principles, bipartisan outreach, and ability to get results. As someone who grew up on an orchard and fruit stand in Kettle Falls, Washington, worked at her family's small business, and later became a wife and working mom of three, Cathy has lived the American Dream. She works every day to rebuild that Dream for our children and grandchildren. Cathy was the 200th woman ever elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and the first woman to give birth three times while in office. Cathy's husband Brian is a retired Navy Commander.



Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02)

Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. is the Chairman of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. In addition, he serves on the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee and is Vice Chair on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. He has represented the Second Congressional District of Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1993. As an appropriator and legislator he seeks to use the legislative process to create a better quality of life for all citizens by promoting jobs and a stronger, more diversified economy; opportunities for rural areas; better education; safe and secure communities; a clean environment; affordable and accessible health care; sustainable agriculture; energy independence; and a strong national defense -- all within the context of a balanced budget.

OPENING REMARKS



COLONEL CASSIUS T. BENTLEY III
COMMANDER, FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE

Colonel Cassius T. Bentley III is the Commander of the 92d Air Refueling Wing, Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington. The Wing provides global reach airpower and deploys expeditionary forces in support of worldwide combat, contingency, and humanitarian requirements. The Wing operates 63 KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft performing refueling, airlift, and aeromedical evacuation missions supporting US and coalition contingency operations and USSTRATCOM strategic deterrence missions. As installation commander, Colonel Bentley is also responsible for activities and assigned functions of Fairchild Air Force Base and support for 18 associate units. Prior to this assignment, he served as the Vice Wing Commander at the 100th Air Refueling, Royal Air Force Mildenhall, United Kingdom.

Colonel Bentley received his commission through ROTC and graduated from the University of Kentucky and Centre College in 1998 via the 3-2 Dual Degree Engineering program. He has held positions in the C-17A Special Operations Low Level II program, Red Flag-Alaska, US European Command J4, Squadron Command, Deputy Operations Group Commander, and as the Executive Officer to the Air Mobility Commander. As the 15th Airlift Squadron commander, he led the squadron to be recognized as the #1 Airlift Squadron in Air Mobility Command by winning the General Joseph Smith Trophy. He holds a membership at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, England, where he studied foreign relations with senior and general officers from more than 50 nations.

Colonel Bentley is a command pilot, having logged more than 4,400 hours in the KC-135, C-17, T-1, and T-37.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense

Dr. Mark T. Esper was born on April 26, 1964, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He is a 1986 graduate of the United States Military Academy and received his commission in the Infantry. Upon completion of Ranger and Pathfinder training, he served in the 101st Airborne Division and participated in the 1990-91 Gulf War with the "Screaming Eagles." He later commanded a Rifle Company in the 3-325 Airborne Battalion Combat Team in Vicenza, Italy. He retired from the U.S. Army in 2007 after spending 10 years on active duty and 11 years in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

After leaving active duty, he served as Chief of Staff at The Heritage Foundation think tank, followed by service as legislative director and senior policy advisor to former Senator Chuck Hagel. He was a senior professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations and Senate Government Affairs committees, policy director for the House Armed Services Committee, and national security advisor for former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. During the President George W. Bush administration, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy at the Pentagon.

From 2006-2007, Dr. Esper was the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of Defense and International Affairs at Aerospace Industries Association. He was the national policy director to Senator Fred Thompson for his 2008 presidential campaign, and was a Senate-appointed commissioner on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Dr. Esper later served concurrently as the Executive Vice President for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center and as Vice President for Europe and Eurasian Affairs from 2008-2010. Before being nominated as the Secretary of the Army in 2017, Dr. Esper was the Vice President for Government Relations at the Raytheon Company.

Dr. Esper is a recipient of the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. Among his many military awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Saudi Arabia, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Dr. Esper holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a doctorate in Public Policy from George Washington University. Dr. Esper and his wife, Leah, have been married for 30 years and have 3 adult children.

The Honorable Mark T. Esper was sworn in as the 27th Secretary of Defense July 23, 2019. He served as Acting Secretary of Defense from June 24, 2019, to July 15, 2019. Dr. Esper served as the Secretary of the Army from Nov. 20, 2017, to June 24, 2019, and from July 15, 2019, to July 23, 2019.

OPENING REMARKS

**MATTHEW P. DONOVAN***Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness*

The Honorable Matthew P. Donovan is the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Mr. Donovan serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for force readiness; force management; health affairs; National Guard and Reserve component affairs; education and training; and military and civilian personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality of life matters.

A Presidential appointee confirmed by the United States Senate in March 2020, Mr. Donovan provides policy, guidance, and oversight for the readiness, management, and healthcare of the Department's 4.5 million total force service members, retirees, their families, and the civilian workforce.

In his previous capacity, Mr. Donovan served as the Under Secretary of the Air Force from August 2017 until March 2020 and as the Acting Secretary of the Air Force from June 2019 until October 2019.

Prior to his tenure as the Under Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. Donovan was majority policy director and professional staff member on the U. S. Senate Committee on Armed Services. In those positions he provided advice, counsel, and recommendations to the committee chairman on global regional security affairs, as well as matters related to readiness and sustainment programs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

Mr. Donovan retired from the United States Air Force as a colonel after 31 years of enlisted and officer active duty service. He is a command pilot with over 2,900 hours of flight time in the F-15C Eagle and the F-5E Tiger II.

Mr. Donovan holds a Bachelor of Science degree in technical management from Regis University. He also earned a Master of Arts degree in management from Webster University, a Master of Arts degree in Airpower Art and Science from the USAF School of Advanced Airpower Studies, and a Master of Arts degree in Military Arts and Sciences from the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies.

EDUCATION



JENNIFER DRAKE PATRICK

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Jennifer Drake Patrick is an Assistant Professor in the Literacy Program in the George Mason University School of Education, College of Education and Human Development. She earned her Ph.D. in 2009 from The University of Florida. Jennifer has worked in schools that serve high populations of military children, including serving on the Fairfax County Military Process Action Team. She spearheaded the Operation Educate the Educators Task Group in the College of Education and Human Development which resulted in an online training module for preservice teachers to increase understanding about working with military-connected youth. Jennifer is married to a retired Naval officer and they have 3 school-aged children.



STACY HUISMAN

JOURNALIST, MILITARY SPOUSE, AND AUTHOR

Stacy Allsbrook-Huisman is an active duty Air Force spouse, journalist, parent, and advocate within the military family community. Stacy recently made her eighth move with the military, moving from Tampa, FL to NoVa/DC area. Her husband has spent 28 years in the Air Force (and counting) and their two children, 13 and 12-years old, have experienced six school changes to date. She is coauthor of *Seasons of My Military Student: Practical Ideas for Parents and Teachers* (Elva Resa 2018) - a handbook for teachers and parents supporting military-connected children in the classroom. Stacy has authored dozens of published articles addressing the challenges of military families in public education both online and national publications. As a former Parent-to-Parent trainer for the Military Child Education Coalition, she led workshops and seminars on many topics related to the education of military-connected students. Prior to marrying into the military, she worked in public affairs for the city of Las Vegas for 14 years and was the Executive Director for the Las Vegas Centennial Celebration in 2005.

EDUCATION



SUSIE SINCOCK
TEACHER

Susie Sincock is an Air Force spouse, mother, educator and collaborator. Over the past 18 years, she and her family have moved 8 times with the military, most recently from Naples, Italy to Colorado Springs, where her husband plans to retire after a 22-year-career with the Air Force. Susie has taught in four states as an elementary teacher and has had the privilege of being part of many PTO boards, first as a parent, then as a teacher liaison and activity coordinator. Susie is passionate about military child connectivity and helping families be involved in their local school community.



Pete LuPiba
Comissioner, Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission

Pete LuPiba is the Ohio MIC3 commissioner. Appointed in 2012 by Governor Kasich, Pete was reappointed by 2019 by Governor DeWine. Pete also serves as the Deputy Director for the Office of Budget and Management in Ohio. LuPiba previously served as a Public Affairs Officer at the Ohio Department of Education from 2007 to 2019. In 2016, Pete founded the Purple Star Award, which recognizes Military family-friendly schools. The Purple Star has been awarded to schools in more than 10 states, including Virginia, Texas, Montana, South Carolina, and New Hampshire, and Ohio. Pete served active duty in the United States Navy – deploying (Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11) to Iraq in 2006. Pete is an alumni of The Ohio State University and University of Southern California.

SPECIAL EDUCATION



MICHELLE NORMAN
PARTNERS IN PROMISE

Michelle Norman, Executive Director and Co-founder of Partners in PROMISE and the 2019 AFI Navy Spouse of the Year, is a Navy spouse of 25 years and mother of a 17-year-old daughter with cerebral palsy and multiple other disabilities. After years of successfully advocating and winning multiple legal cases to ensure her daughter received the minimum education required by law, Norman focused her advocacy to support all military children with special needs. Norman enacted change through persistent engagement with Congress and Virginia legislators to include drafting successful federal and state legislation that will remove educational hurdles that exceptional military families face. In her downtime, the Virginia Beach resident enjoys traveling, organizing, and spending quality time with her husband, two children, and Labradoodle.



REAR ADMIRAL CHARLES W. ROCK
COMMANDER, NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC

Rear Adm. Charles W. Rock is a native of Upstate New York. He was commissioned in 1987 through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Program at Texas A&M University, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Ocean Engineering. Rock holds a master's degree in national security strategy from the National War College.

His assignments at sea include combat information center officer aboard USS Mahlon S. Tisdale (FFG 27), electrical officer aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), operations officer on USS Cole (DDG 67) and USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), executive officer aboard USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), and commanding officer on High Speed Vessel Swift (HSV) 2.

Ashore he has served as command, control and communications plans officer, U.S. European Command; military assistant to the political advisor, U.S. Joint Forces Command; deputy executive assistant and flag secretary to the Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command and the Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation; division chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J-5), the Joint Chiefs of Staff; chief of staff, Navy Installations Command; commander Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan; and as Commandant, Naval District Washington. Rock assumed command of the Navy's Mid-Atlantic Region on July 20, 2018.

SPECIAL EDUCATION



JENNIFER BARNHILL
PARTNERS IN PROMISE

Jennifer Barnhill is the Chief Operating Officer for Partners in PROMISE, a freelance writer with a focus on military family advocacy and an active duty Navy spouse of 14 years. Her reporting has been featured in Military.com, the War Horse, We Are the Mighty, Military Spouse Magazine, Military Families Magazine and TheMilitaryWallet.com. Jennifer's passion for advocating for the military community brought her to Partners in PROMISE in February 2020, where she spearheads their public relations initiatives and annual Military Special Education Survey. The 2021 survey seeks to discover if military service has an impact on the ability for military children with special needs to receive the Free and Appropriate Public Education afforded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Jennifer is currently studying at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in pursuit of her Master of Public Administration, with a concentration in nonprofit management.



GRACE KIM
PARTNERS IN PROMISE

GRACE E. KIM is the principal attorney with The Law Office of Grace E. Kim, P.C. She focuses her practice on Special Education and Education Law, to include issues involving the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), restraint and seclusion, school discipline, and higher education issues. Ms. Kim has been working on behalf of children with Special Needs since 2002 as a mother of a Special Needs child. This led her to become an attorney dedicating her practice to representing families of Special Needs children with legal and education-related issues. She earned her B.A. degree from Nyack College, her M.A. degree from Alliance Theological Seminary, and her J.D. degree from the George Mason School of Law. Ms. Kim is a founding member of Partners in Promise, an education and advocacy group working on behalf of military special needs children, and lectures on Special Education and related topics for various organizations. Ms. Kim lives in Virginia with her husband, Joshua, her daughter, Karis (12) and her son, Josiah (18) who is on the Autism Spectrum with co-morbid conditions and other neurological and physical disabilities.

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM



REP. TRENT KELLY (MS-01)

Trent has spent 34 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard as a Combat Engineer and is currently serving as a Brigadier General. In 1990, he mobilized for Desert Storm as an Engineer Second Lieutenant. In 2005, he deployed as a Major to Iraq with the 155th Brigade as the Operations Officer of the 150th Engineer Battalion. From 2009 to 2010, he deployed as a Lieutenant Colonel to Iraq as the Battalion Commander of Task Force Knight of the 155th Brigade Combat Team and commanded over 670 troops from Mississippi, Ohio, and Kentucky. He has received two Bronze Stars, the Combat Action Badge, the Bronze, Silver, and Gold de Fleury medals, and numerous other federal and state awards for his service. In Congress, Trent serves on the House Armed Services Committee, serving as the Ranking Member of the Military Personnel Subcommittee. Trent also serves on the House Agriculture Committee.



JESSICA STRONG
BLUE STAR FAMILIES

Jessica Strong joined Blue Star Families as a Volunteer Chapter Director in 2017, then as a Consultant shortly thereafter, and joined the BSF Staff as an Applied Research Analyst in 2019. Her work with Applied Research focuses on the annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey, as well as developing, executing, and analyzing other research projects that support Blue Star Families mission and enhance the national conversation about military families.

She holds a Master's degree in Social Work from Fayetteville State University and a PhD in Social Work from Rutgers University, which she uses to advance the research available on understanding military family issues and how helping professionals can support military families.

She has previously researched military families as an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, publishing her research in the professional literature and focusing on teaching military-affiliated students at the extension site aboard Camp LeJeune. Jessica is an active duty Army spouse with three children, currently stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY.

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM

**CHELSEA HULL*****SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AND PARENT***

Mrs. Chelsea Hull is an active duty Navy spouse and the mother of two children with special needs. Their son was diagnosed with Autism and ADHD during a geographic separation. When Mrs. Hull requested an initial evaluation for special education for her son was denied. Mrs. Hull pursued actions with the California State Board of Education. Mrs. Hull holds a BA and MA in Deaf Education and has worked in Special Education in four different states for over 20 years. Mrs. Hull is a leader with the Hands & Voices Military Project which supports families of children with hearing loss.

PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION

**KELLIE ARTIS*****COO AT MILLIE***

Kellie Artis is the COO of MILLIE, a startup focused on alleviating the stress of frequent relocations felt by military families by connecting them with objective resources and vetted service providers. Kellie serves on several boards including the Military Family Advisor Network advisory board (2017-19 and 19-21 cohorts); a local theater company called Sweet Tea Shakespeare, and the executive board for Child of this Culture Foundation, Inc. Kellie earned her Bachelor of Arts in Corporate Communication with a double minor in Business Administration and Spanish from the College of Charleston, SC. She currently lives in Fayetteville, NC with her husband, an active-duty Army officer, and two children.

PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION



RICK MARSH
DP3 DIRECTOR USTRANSCOM

Rick Marsh, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the deputy director, Strategic Plans, Policy, and Logistics at U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. USTRANSCOM is a global combatant command with functional responsibilities for air, land and sea transportation for the Department of Defense, ultimately delivering national objectives on behalf of the President and Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Marsh entered federal service as a Department of Army intern in 2002, and spent the majority of his career serving in battalion and brigade level assignments with the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. Prior to his current position, Mr. Marsh served as Chief, Transportation Policy on the Army Staff.



MEGAN HARLESS
PCS ACTIVIST AND MILITARY SPOUSE

Megan Harless is the 2020 miliary.com Spouse Changemaker of the Year for her efforts in advocating for PCS Reform. Over the past 2 years, Megan has worked with members of Congress, US Transportation Command, and the moving industry to improve the PCS process and experience. Megan has been an active duty military spouse for 15 years, and is an Army Veteran herself serving 4 years. Together they have gone through 10 PCS's in those 15 years.

CHILDCARE



REP. CHRISSY HOULAHAN, PA-06

U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan is an Air Force veteran, engineer, entrepreneur, and educator who is continuing her career of service as the first woman ever to represent Pennsylvania's 6th District in Congress.

Chrissy is the daughter and granddaughter of Holocaust survivors who came to America with nothing. She grew up in a military family; her parents met when her father and grandfather flew P3s in the same Navy squadron. She earned her engineering degree from Stanford with an ROTC scholarship that launched her service in the U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserves, and later earned her M.S. in Technology and Policy from MIT.

Chrissy has helped lead several thriving Southeastern Pennsylvania companies including AND1, a basketball apparel company headquartered in Paoli, and B Lab, the organization that launched the B Corporation movement. She went on to serve in Teach for America as a chemistry teacher at Simon Gratz High School in North Philadelphia, and then led and scaled a non-profit helping thousands of underserved students all across America build their literacy skills.

These experiences helped shape her political vision of a great nation united by common values that leaves no one behind. She is committed to fighting for access to quality, affordable healthcare, common sense gun safety, government accountability and transparency, and working to build a strong, stable economy with good jobs and good benefits for everyone.

Chrissy is a leader driven by a spirit of service. She's a mom, a longtime resident of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and a first-time congressional representative heading to Washington to solve real problems for the people and communities of Pennsylvania.



COLONEL ROJAN ROBOTHAM US AIR FORCE

Col Rojan Robotham is a currently serving Air Force officer with over 21 years in various acquisition positions in both air and space. Rojan and her husband, Kwesi have been married for 14 years. They have moved several times across the country while trying to keep both of their careers on track. Together they have three young boys aged 12, 9 and 6. She recently published a book titled "Working Moms: How We Do 'It'" to encourage more women to stay in the military while also raising children.

CHILDCARE

**ERYN WAGNON**

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR MILITARY FAMILY POLICY AND SPOUSE PROGRAMS AT MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Eryn Wagnon came to MOAA in May 2018 as a military spouse fellow sponsored by the Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program. She joined the MOAA staff permanently in July 2018 and is currently the director of government relations for military family policy and spouse programs. Eryn holds a M.A. in Social Science from Georgia Southern University and a B.A. in Sociology and Spanish from Stetson University. Her background includes expertise in social research, cultural sociology, symbolic interactionism, and military sociology. Prior to joining MOAA, Eryn taught sociology as an adjunct faculty member at Georgia Southern University and University of South Carolina- Aiken.

HEALTHCARE

**KAREN RUEDISUELI**

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR HEALTH AFFAIRS AT MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Karen Ruedisueli is MOAA's director of government relations for health affairs. In this capacity, she also serves as co-chair of The Military Coalition's (TMC) Health Care Committee. Karen has testified before Congress and built relationships with DoD leaders to advance solutions to military health system problems and ensure transparency and accountability in policy implementation.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Karen previously worked as a marketing and management consultant. As an Army spouse and Family Readiness Group leader, she assisted families with a variety of challenges during the unit's train up and deployment to Afghanistan. Karen and her husband, MAJ Kurt Ruedisueli, USA (Ret), currently reside in the Washington, D.C., metro area with their two children.

HEALTHCARE



KARA TOLLETT OAKLEY, ESQ.
PRINCIPAL AND FOUNDER AT OAKLEY CAPITOL CONSULTING

Having devoted much of her career to representation of children's hospitals, Kara has developed an expertise in child health care policy and health care financing. She has successfully positioned children's hospitals to thrive in a complex Department of Defense health care system, improved children's health coverage, access to care, and care experiences for military families, and accomplished millions of dollars in reimbursement improvements and recoupment of underpayments.

Congressional advocacy highlights include crafting the seminal legislation to improve military healthcare for children and children with special needs, Tricare for Kids, and shepherding it through Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act; securing funding for two fledgling child advocacy centers, a children's research institute, and a community health and wellness initiative. Kara created and leads the Tricare for Kids Coalition of stakeholders, building on legislative gains and working to improve healthcare and support services for children of military families.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee and Florida State University College of Law with honors, Kara cheers the Volunteers and Seminoles to victory from her home in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains.

HOUSING



MAUREEN ELLIOTT
MILITARY HOUSING ADVOCATE

Maureen Elliott, stationed at Ft Hood, TX, along with her 5 children (Gabrielle 19, Gavin 18, Kane 15, Cole 13, and Amaya 11) and active duty Army husband SFC Shannon Elliott. Maureen is an advocate for safe military housing. Having first hand experience with military housing, she is able to offer insight on systemic issues that soldiers and their families may face while living on installations operated by privatized housing companies. She volunteers her time with different organizations to help create awareness.

HOUSING

**SHANNON RAZSADIN***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT MILITARY FAMILY ADVISORY NETWORK*

Shannon Razsadin is the executive director of the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN), an active duty Navy spouse, and mom of two toddlers.

MFAN was founded in 2013 to fill a persisting gap in the military community: the inability to quickly and effectively understand the modern military family and connect military families to the resources they need to thrive. Under Shannon's leadership, MFAN has become a premier, respected nonprofit leader in a crowded and sometimes confusing network of military and veteran service organizations.

Shannon was selected through a competitive process to serve as one of three civilian advisors to the Secretary of Defense on the Military Family Readiness Council, and is regularly called on by national and local media to weigh in on military-related topics, including CBS, CNN, and FOX.

Shannon's leadership, authenticity, fresh approach, and focus on collaboration have enabled her to earn the trust of military families and leaders within the public and private sector who seek advisement on the evolving needs of the modern military family.

Shannon, her husband, and their children live in Newport, Rhode Island... for now. Home is where the Navy sends you.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT AND LICENSING

**MICHELLE PENCZAK***CEO OF SQUARED AWAY*

Michelle is the CEO and Co- Founder of Squared Away. Squared Away is a partner of Hire Our Heroes, a non-profit organization that supports Military Members, Veterans and Military Spouses in finding meaningful employment. In addition to Squared Away, Michelle is the founder of Savvy Spouse, a job resource site for military spouses, and Michelle Penczak Executive Assisting. Previously, Michelle worked as a manager and virtual assistant with Zirtual.

Michelle has a BA in Political Science and History from King University, as well as a paralegal certificate from George Mason University. Currently, Michelle lives in Kailua, Hawaii and works with clients from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT AND LICENSING



SUE HOPPIN

FOUNDER OF NATIONAL MILITARY SPOUSE NETWORK

In 2012, Sue was appointed by President Obama to the Board of Visitors of the United States Air Force Academy; she completed her tenure in 2018 as the board's Vice Chairman. In 2010, Sue founded the National Military Spouse Network, a professional development and networking membership organization supporting the professional career and entrepreneurial goals of military spouses. Before founding the NMSN, Sue served as the first deputy director for spouse outreach for the Military Officers Association of America, charged with creating and spearheading military spouse initiatives for the 375,000 member association. In 2007, Sue co-authored, "A Family's Guide to the Military" for the popular Dummies series; the book was selected for First Lady of the Marine Corp's Recommended Reading List in 2012. In recognition of her accomplishments, Military Spouse Magazine named Sue on both their 2007 and 2008 Who's Who of Military Spouses list recognizing those who have made significant contributions in the military community for all military spouses; making her the only person to be named on the list two years in a row.

Sue is a volunteers as the President of the Madeira School Alumni Council (2017 - present), Board of Directors for Blue Star Families (2010 - 2013) and as Military Family Liaison to Fairfax County School Superintendent's Business and Community Advisory Council (2009-2012). Recognition for her volunteer efforts include: nominee for USAF's Joan Orr Spouse of the Year (2007); 76th Airlift Squadron Spouse of the Year, Germany (2002); Volunteer of the Year at McConnell AFB, KS (1999). For 9 years, she served as the Publicity Chairman on the Air Force Charity Ball Committee that has raised over \$7.5 million for the Air Force Aid Society since its inception in 2004. Sue holds a bachelor's degree in international studies from the University of Denver, a master's degree in international relations from the University of Oklahoma and a certificate in nonprofit management from Georgetown University.

MILITARY RETIREMENT

**PARISA FETHERSON**

*DIRECTOR, MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES,
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, QUANTICO*

When she heard about the challenges of boot camp, Parisa Fetherson, said “bring it on.” After enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1979, Fetherson climbed the ranks to become a sergeant major in 2001. Throughout her 26 years of active duty service, Parisa traveled the world and met her husband of 34 years, retired Sgt. Maj. Ron Fetherson, while stationed in Japan. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in social psychology from Park University, Parisa earned a master’s degree in education. She is currently the director of professional development programs at Marine Corps Base Quantico. Last year, she was co-chair of the Women Marines Association’s national Centennial Celebration. In her day-to-day, Parisa manages programs to enhance the development and quality of life for service members, family members, retirees, and DOD civilians.

**DR. AMANDA TRIMILLOS**

*UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, AUTHOR, AND MILITARY
SPOUSE AND MOTHER*

Dr. Amanda Trimillos is mother of four school age children, secondary school teacher, university professor, Education lobbyist and blogger, and Air Force Key Spouse. She is a coauthor of *Seasons of My Military Student: Practical Ideas for Parents and Teachers*. Her eight military assignments during the past 22 years include three overseas locations and managing the Homefront during 2,000+ days of deployments and TDYs. The Trimillos family successfully retired to Colorado Springs, CO in Aug 2020 while assigned to Germany after four other attempts to hang up the flight suit. COVID-19 accounted for three of those attempts.